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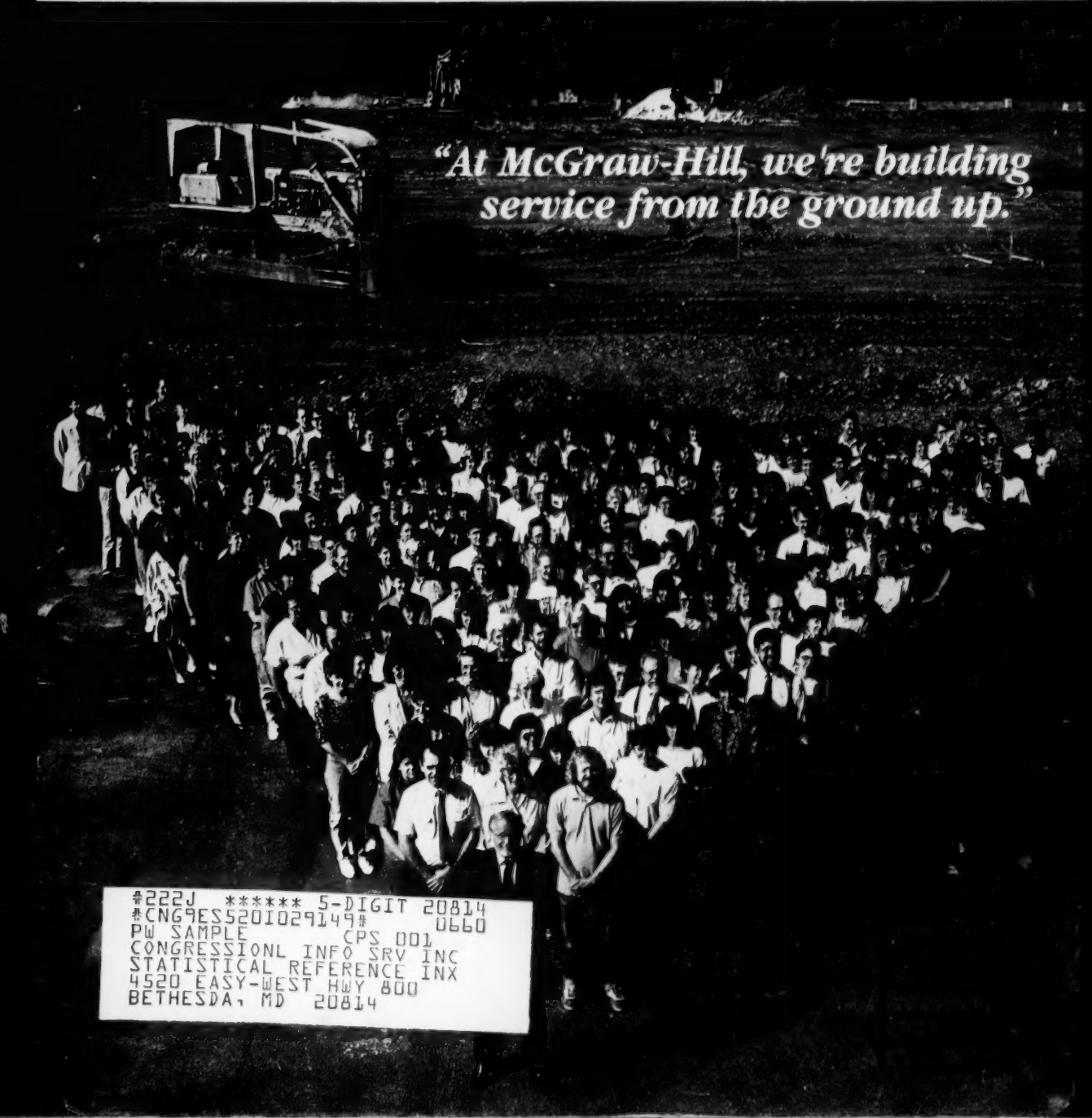

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Publishers Weekly

VOLUME 237 NUMBER 41 *THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS MAGAZINE OF BOOK PUBLISHING* OCTOBER 12, 1990
ISSN 0000-0019

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AAP Sales Report for August

Category	% change, August*	% change, YTD
Adult hardcover	29.3	8.2
Adult paperback	5.1	20.7
Juvenile hardcover	35.3	23.4
Juvenile paperback	26.6	28.4
Univ. pr. hardcover	4.5	10.7
Univ. pr. paperback	6.5	16.8
Bibles, etc.	25.6	13.5
Mass market paperback	8.9	12.1
Book club	9.4	-0.1
Mail order	19.7	-15.3
Sci-tech	-2.0	8.3
College texts	6.8	7.9
School texts	8.4	2.6

*Percent changes measured against same time periods, 1989.

Octopus Expands U.S. Presence

Octopus Publishing, the consumer division of Reed International Books, is stepping up the group's presence in the United States.

Octopus Books Inc. in New York has run a small customer-services operation combined with a sales office for Mandarin Offset, the group's printing division. Now Jonathan Goodman has moved from the post of publisher of the group's illustrated division to head Octopus Books Inc., and will oversee a considerable expansion of its activities.

Richard Charkin, CEO of the consumer division, explained to *PW* that at present most of the promotional product for the United States market is produced in Britain. With exchange rates varying, this no longer makes sense, and Charkin also stressed the importance of publishing for the market: "We are sending our most experienced publisher to the United States to set up a packaging operation to serve our customers better and to produce books appropriately created for the American and international markets."

This development coincides with the group's announcement of the formation of an international sales department to handle titles in English worldwide, except for North America and Australia, for which the group's local companies or agents will retain responsibility. The new department is headed by international sales director Terence Cross and will handle all the group's imprints.

—VIVIENNE MENKES

MCA Talks with Matsushita

If current talks between MCA and Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. result in a merger, the Putnam Berkley group will become the first major U.S. publisher to be owned by a Japanese firm.

Putnam Berkley is a small part of MCA's empire that consists of Universal Pictures, Universal Television, Motown Records, theme parks, movie theaters and real estate. The publishing operations contributed an estimated 6% of MCA's 1989 revenues of $3.4 billion.

Matsushita is Japan's largest consumer electronics company, whose brand names include Panasonic and Quasar, and it had sales last year of approximately $44.4 billion.

Former Lover Files $4.75 Million Suit Against Penguin Novelist

Claiming to be the model for a central character in *Disappearing Acts*, a former lover of the novel's author, Terry McMillan, has filed a $4.75 million defamation suit against her, the book's hardcover publisher, Penguin USA, and Simon & Schuster, which issued the paperback.

Seven years ago Viking Press, an imprint of Penguin USA, won a precedent-setting case when the court rejected an ex-lover's claim that she'd been libeled by her alleged use as the model for a character in Robert Tine's novel *State of Grace*.

Nevertheless, Peter Gordon of Feinberg, Berns & Castro, attorney for Leonard Welch, McMillan's former lover, told *PW*, "The book is defamatory; it's an attempt to inflict mental injury on my client. The two [McMillan and Welch] were together for three years and the book contains numerous sections, at least 60 paragraphs, that relate to his life. There is no question about the similarities between my client and the character."

Gordon, who said the two have a child together and at one time had planned to marry, also notes that McMillan sent a copy of the book to Welch with the inscription: "Please read it with the same love and compassion that forced me to write it. But try to read it as fiction because I took liberties in order to make the story more plausible."

Gordon contends that the book's alleged association of Welch's personal habits with the central character in the novel—a black construction worker who is a rapist, a racist, a drunk and a swindler—may effect Welch's ability to find work. Welch is a construction worker.

Despite the apparent strength of legal precedents protecting author and publisher, Martin Garbus of Frankfurt, Garbus, Klein & Selz, attorney for McMillan and Penguin USA, was concerned about the suit. "Once again this raises the question of the freedom of an author to write. It has the potential to severely limit the writing of fiction." Garbus plans to file for dismissal.

Elsevier to Sell Wolters Kluwer Stake

Elsevier has announced from Amsterdam that it plans to sell its 33% holding in Wolters Kluwer, another Dutch company, as soon as market conditions permit. The Wolters Kluwer stake is a relic of a hostile takeover try at the time the old Kluwer Group seemed up for grabs. Kluwer subsequently merged with Wolters Samson. (Elsevier will hold on to its 9% of the U.K.'s Pearson, which both parties seem to see as a European partnership with potential.)

Elsevier said trading income for January through June of this year is up 18% over the first six months of 1989; it expects the full year to confirm these results. Net sales came to 1,032 million guilders. A recent dollar quotation was $1=1.8 guilders.

Wolters Kluwer announced a 34% rise in net income for the first six months, part of the increase due to acquisitions. The results of newly acquired J.B. Lippincott are included on the basis of preliminary figures, and the WK board expects that in the second half of the year Lippincott earnings will balance out against financing charges of the purchase. The group predicts net income for the full year of 170 million guilders, a rise of over 20% from 1989. —H. R. L. □

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Publishers Weekly is published weekly by Bowker Magazine Group, The Cahners Publishing Co., a Division of Reed Publishing USA, 275 Washington St., Newton MA 02158-1630. Terrence M. McDermott, President; Robert T. Brawn, Sr. Vice President/General Manager; Jerry D. Neth, Sr. Vice President, Publishing Operations; J. J. Walsh, Sr. Vice President, Finance; Thomas J. Dellamaria, Sr. Vice President, Production & Manufacturing; Ralph Knupp, Vice President, Human Resources. Bowker Magazine Group is also an affiliate of R. R. Bowker Co., Gordon Graham, Chairman of the Board; Ira Siegel, President. Copyright © 1990 by Reed Publishing USA; Chairman: Ronald G. Segel, Chairman and CEO; Robert L. Krakoff, President and COO; William M. Platt, Sr. Vice President. Printed in the U.S.A. SUBSCRIPTION: U.S.A.: 1 year $119, 2 years $199, 3 years $279. Canada: 1 year $177, 2 years $301, 3 years $425. Air delivery to all other countries: 1 year $260, 2 years $442, 3 years $624. (Remit in U.S. funds only.) PUBLICATION ADDRESS: Publishers Weekly, P.O. Box 1979, Marion, OH 43302. *Address editorial and advertising correspondence to* 249 West 17th Street, New York, NY 10011; telephone: 212-645-0067; telex: 12-7703; fax: 212-645-5409. *Address circulation correspondence and changes of address to* Publishers Weekly, P.O. Box 1979, Marion, OH 43302; telephone 1-800-842-1669; in Alaska, Hawaii, Canada, and all other countries, telephone 614-382-3322. **ISSN 0000-0019.** Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *Publishers Weekly*, P.O. Box 1979, Marion, OH 43302. Cahners Publishing Company, a Division of Reed Publishing USA: Specialized Business Magazines for Building & Construction, Research, Technology, Electronics, Computing, Printing, Publishing, Health Care, Foodservice, Packaging, Environmental Engineering, Manufacturing, Entertainment, Home Furnishings, and Interior Design. Specialized Consumer Magazines for Child Care, Boating, and Wedding Planning.